

# Preface

Polls indicate that most Americans would prefer to cycle and walk more, and drive less. However, they hesitate to use the streets because of the lack of accommodations for safe and accessible travel. A concept known as Active Transportation, through the ‘Complete Streets’ movement and shared-use greenways, calls for the creation of integrated on-road and off-road networks that routinely accommodate all travelers: drivers, transit users, pedestrians, bicyclists, older citizens, children, and people with disabilities. These accommodations increase pedestrian, cyclist and transit usage of streets and paths, positively impacting health, environmental quality, the social climate of the community, and the economic vitality of a community.

A generation ago it was normal to walk or cycle to work and school. Today most use a car. Safety is cited as the main reason for the shift (CDC 2005). This is logical as evidenced by the number of accidents between pedestrian and cyclists; and cars. In Ontario County, State Police reports indicate, 2005 thru 2006, 44 pedestrian/motor vehicle accidents with 4 deaths and 37 bicyclists/motor vehicle accidents with 2 deaths. In the City of Canandaigua, from 2005 thru 2008, there were 10 reported pedestrian/motor vehicle accidents and 12 bicycle/motor vehicle accidents.

Unfortunately the young are disproportionately affected by accidents. In 2005 New York State youths 5-17 (25 percent of the population) had over 60 % of cycling accidents and over 25 % of the pedestrian accidents. According to the New York State Department of Health’s Bureau of Injury Prevention, the leading cause of injury, hospitalization, and death among 5-9 year olds in New York State is being struck, as pedestrians, by motor vehicles. In addition, children ages 5-19 are more at risk than any other age group for being hospitalized for bicycle/motor vehicle collision related injury.

However, not just accidents kill or injure. Bad health does too, and decline in the health of our nation can partially be attributed to lack of exercise and obesity. In upstate New York, medical spending for overweight and obesity related causes in adults increases annually by \$314 million and \$600 million, respectively (Excellus/Univera Healthcare “Obesity in Upstate New York: Trends, Costs, Opportunities.” Health Policy Reports, No. 7, March 2004). Providing safer streets to encourage more exercise can be a key element in turning around this general decline in health.

## Mission Statement of the U.S. Department of Transportation

“Serve the United States by ensuring a fast, safe, efficient, accessible and convenient transportation system that meets our vital national interests and enhances the quality of life of the American people, today and into the future”

New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law, Section 1231 states:

“Traffic laws apply to persons riding bicycles or skating or gliding on in-line skates. Every person riding a bicycle or skating or gliding on in-line skates upon a roadway shall be granted all the rights and shall be subject to all of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle by this title, except as to special regulations in this article and except as to those provisions of this title which by their nature can have no application.”

New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law, Section 1151 states:

“Pedestrians’ right of way in crosswalks. (a) When traffic-control signals are not in place or not in operation the driver shall yield the right of way, slowing down or stopping if need be to yield, to a pedestrian crossing the roadway within a crosswalk on the roadway upon which the vehicle is traveling...

Our bad health can also be partially attributed to poor air quality. We in the Finger Lakes are fortunate to live in an area that is windy and not as densely populated. Still any shift from dependency on always riding in carbon emitting vehicles will improve air quality.

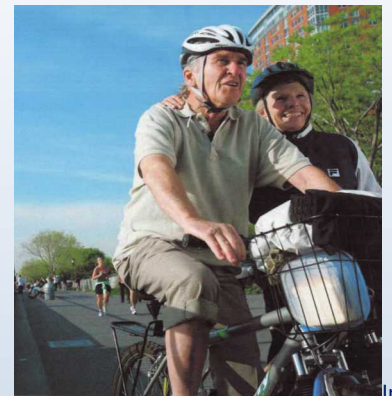
More difficult to quantify than health and safety is general quality of life. A community that is attractive to pedestrians and cyclists because they feel comfortable could be said to have a higher quality of life. Each Halloween Canandaigua hundreds of children descend upon our streets for trick or treating. The children and their parents see Canandaigua as a safe and attractive place to spend that special evening. This is evidence of an existing high quality of life that we must nurture. Extending this attractiveness to all times will improve the economic vitality of our community. Streets that accommodate pedestrian and bicyclists encourage residents and tourists to linger in shops and restaurants, visit parks and cultural attractions, creating the potential for economic growth in a community. Complete streets and multi-use greenways enhance the quality of life; a critical factor in attracting and retaining business and industry. Furthermore, it has been shown that “Complete Streets” increase social capital by fostering vibrant cultural and social interactions and creating a heightened sense of community. This in turn often results in lower crime rates and greater civic involvement.

A final benefit from the implementation of Active Transportation projects in a community is the enhanced independence of older adults and disabled individuals – an important consideration as our population ages. The year 2006 saw the first of the baby boomers reach 60 years of age. These individuals will be looking for ways to maintain their independence as their willingness and ability to drive personal motor vehicles decreases with age. Communities that offer widespread pedestrian and public transit accommodations will fare well with aging baby boomers who wish to maintain their independence.

In conclusion, considering the fluctuating fuel prices, the realization that fossil fuel is a finite resource, the public’s cry for a better quality of life and cleaner environment, our children’s obesity epidemic and finally our economic distress, now is the time to invest in Active Transportation projects that reverse or at least slow down the deterioration of our health and environment. The implementation of Active Transportation Plan and initiating collaborative programs with community organizations will enhance our quality of life, improve our environment, and create economic vitality.

Childhood Obesity is a “National Catastrophe” How obese children suffer<sup>15</sup>.

1. 5 years shorter life expectancy
2. High cholesterol 2-3 times more likely
3. Fatty Liver disease occurs in 1/3
4. 25% are at high risk to develop diabetes
5. Asthma occurs 2 times more often
6. Medical costs are 3 times higher



In a survey of American adults age 65 and older, 82% said they worry that they will be stranded and unable to get around when they are unable to drive.<sup>16</sup>

Homeowners ranked walking and biking paths 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 39 attributes used to select a home.

(“The Economic and Social Benefits of Off-road Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities,” National Bicycle and Pedestrian Clearinghouse, No. 2, Sept. 1995)